

# **State Emergency Coordination Center (SECC)**

1900 Williams Street - P.O. Box 4789

Helena, MT 59604-4789

Telephone: (406) 841-3911 Fax: (406) 841-3966

## **Situation Report for August 19, 2007**

(issued @ 1500 hrs.)



# **2007 FIRES**

### **Report Includes:**

- Background Information
  - Fire Restrictions & Closures
  - Air Quality
  - Road Closures/Travel Restrictions
- Current Incident Situation
- New Large Fires
- Weather
- State Declarations
- Local & Tribal Declarations
- Local Government & Tribal Emergency Operations
- Requests for State Financial Assistance
  
- Fire Management Assistance Grants
- EMAC Resources Committed
- Summary of State Resources Committed

### **Important Websites:**

State of Montana Fire Information:

<http://mt.gov/fire.asp>

National Interagency Fire Center

[http://www.nifc.gov/fire\\_info/nfn.htm](http://www.nifc.gov/fire_info/nfn.htm)

Northern Rockies Coordination Center

<http://gacc.nifc.gov/nrcc/>

Inciweb -- Incident Information System

<http://www.inciweb.org/state/27/>

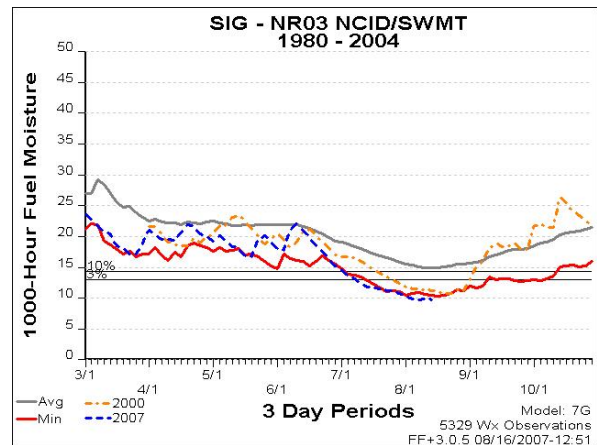
### **I. Background Information**

Since June, hot and dry weather has dominated the region creating very high to extreme fire conditions. Fire Indices are at an all time high while fuel moistures are low. Accompanying the high indices are weather patterns that have set the conditions for lightning and lightning caused starts. High pressure weather patterns over the region are responsible for the high temperatures and little to no moisture. Occasional cold fronts push through the region causing severe lightning storms that ignite wildfires. Rain has accompanied some of these fronts but a return to a high pressure system mitigates any moisture that fell.

### **Long Range Predictions**

Above normal significant fire potential is forecast for most of the Area during August. Fuel moisture conditions should improve during the September through November time period except for eastern Montana. In many areas across western Montana and northern Idaho, downed dead woody fuel moistures are drier than normal and Energy Release Component indices are running near or above record levels and well ahead of normal for this time of year. The Climate Prediction Center's forecast calls for above normal temperatures and below normal precipitation during August, especially over western portions of the Area. Wind

events are likely to increase during August as well. Abundant fine fuels are rapidly curing in eastern Montana and will likely increase the probability for large fire problems during August and into the fall months. **The 1000-hour fuel moisture level for Southwest Montana are setting all time records (See graph on right)!**



**Fire Contracting:** Inquiries regarding contracting fire equipment and other fire resources should be directed to the interested party's local dispatch center or Geographic Area Coordination Center see:

<http://www.fs.fed.us/r1/fire/nrcq/agree-contract/signup.html>

**Fire Restrictions & Closures:** Portions of the state are currently under Stage I or Stage II Fire Restrictions. For definitions of these restrictions, see:

<http://www.mt.blm.gov/fire/restrictions/stagel.pdf>

<http://www.mt.blm.gov/fire/restrictions/stagell.pdf>

**Fire Restrictions in Effect** (for specific areas):

<http://www.mt.blm.gov/fire/restrictions/index.html>

**Air Quality & Smoke:** The Montana Department of Environmental Quality issues a daily forecast and discussion of potential smoke impacts throughout the state. The forecast can be accessed at <http://www.deq.state.mt.us/fireupdates/index.asp>.

**Road Closures & Travel Restrictions:** <http://www.mdt.mt.gov/travinfo/reports/alerts.shtml>

**Administrative Rules of Montana (ARM) Emergency Rules:**

<http://sos.mt.gov/ARM/emergency/index.asp>

### **Department of Fish, Wildlife, & Parks**

[Current Fire Restrictions](#)

[Drought & Fire Updates](#)

[Drought & Fire News](#)

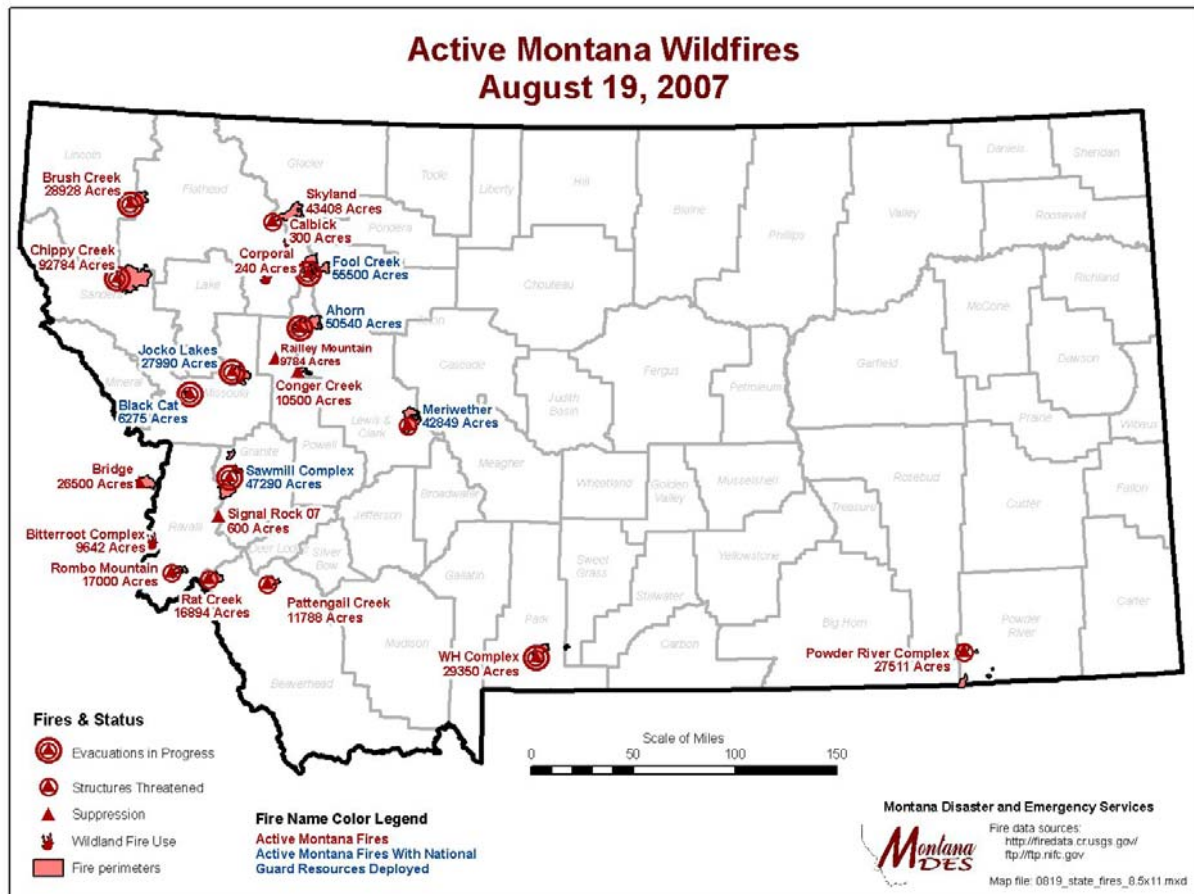
### **Department of Revenue**

<http://mt.gov/revenue/forindividuals/taxrelieffordisaster.asp>

### **Department of Agriculture**

<http://agr.mt.gov/crops/hayFirst.asp>

**II. Current Incident Situation** - Incidents listed according to current NRCG priority. (This report includes summary information for Montana fires that are currently greater than 100 acres in size. Fires are being dropped from this report once they reach 100% containment.) We have included a link to fire perimeters for the several of the incidents: [http://dma.mt.gov/des/Fire\\_Perimeter\\_Maps.asp](http://dma.mt.gov/des/Fire_Perimeter_Maps.asp).



Currently assigned to Montana incidents are:

Area Command Teams	-	1
Type 1 IMT's	-	7
Type 2 IMT's	-	5
Fire Use Management Teams	-	3

The Area Command Team (Zimmerman) that had been assigned to Northern Rockies Coordination Center (Missoula) is now reassigned to help with incident prioritization and resources allocation for fires in Southwestern Montana.

**Black Cat** is located between Highway 93 and Mill Creek, approximately 2 miles SW of Evaro, Montana. Martin's Type 1 IMT is assigned (under Unified Command with Frenchtown FD). Current size is 6,275 acres with 10% containment. Approximately 383 personnel are assigned, plus mutual aid resources from local fire departments. **A total of seven (7) unoccupied structures were lost, but at this time, no primary residences have been reported as destroyed.** On the Frenchtown side of the fire, evacuations along Mill Creek Road (above and including Spring Hill Road) are still in effect. The community of

Evano was evacuated last night. Highway 93 was closed temporarily. A high value railroad trestle is threatened. An American Red Cross Shelter remains opened at the DeSmet Elementary School.

**Jocko Lakes** started on CSKT lands (Flathead Agency, BIA), twenty-six miles NE of Missoula; 8 miles W of Seeley Lake. Wilcox's Type 1 IMT is in command of the incident. Wilcox's IMT is also managing the Ovando Point Fire. The Jocko Lakes Fire is 27,990 acres and 20% contained. Personnel assigned: 1,028. Community of Seeley Lake, surrounding area, Pyramid Lumber Mill and cell tower are threatened. Evacuations are in effect. HWY 83 is opened to through traffic. Structures (8) have been lost.

A **Fire Information Hotline** has been established at the Missoula County Fire Information Call Center from **9:00 am to 9:00 pm** at: **(406)258-3680**. A **24 hour recorded message can be found at (406) 258-4271**.

**Chippy Creek** is located forty-two miles southwest of Kalispell, and 24 miles N of Thompson Falls, MT (Northwestern Land Office, Montana DNRC). Bennett's Type 1 IMT is in command. Size is 92,784 acres with 30% containment. Personnel assigned: 642. Numerous homes remain threatened. Evacuations and Area Closures remain in effect.

**Rombo Mountain** is located in the Bitterroot NF. The fire is located eighteen miles south of Darby, MT. Svalberg's Fire Use Management Team is assigned. A Type 1 IMT (Quisenberry) has been ordered. Estimated size is 17,000 acres with 0% containment. Personnel assigned: 214. The team has assumed management of the Bitterroot Fire Use Complex (16 Wildland Fire Use fires encompassing approximately 9,000 acres). Some residences, Painted Rocks State Park and other commercial property remain threatened. Mandatory evacuations along the West Fork Road occurred yesterday. Precautionary evacuation notices (stage 1) have been issued along the East Fork of the Bitterroot. Area closures remain in effect for areas around Rombo Mountain and W of West Fork Road.

**Sawmill Complex** (4 fires) is located on the Lolo, Bitterroot and Beaverhead – Deerlodge National Forests. The four fires in this complex extend from approximately 22 miles SE of Missoula to an area approximately 23 miles WSW of Phillipsburg, MT. The complex includes a total of 47,290 acres with 15% containment. The complex consists of the Sawmill Creek (7,729 ac), the Wyman #2 (32,056 ac), the Fisher Point (8,007 ac), and the Signal Rock 07 (600 ac) fires. McNitt's Type 2 IMT is assigned. Personnel assigned: 466. Numerous residences and other structures remain threatened. Use Restrictions and Road Closures are in effect within the Rock Creek drainage.

**Rat Creek** is located on the Beaverhead/Deerlodge NF, twenty-five miles west of Wisdom, MT. Molhoek's Type 2 IMT (also managing the Pattengail Creek Fire) is assigned. The fire is now 16,894 acres and is 0% contained. Personnel assigned: 200. Structures are threatened. Park buildings, infrastructure, and cultural resources in the Big Hole National Battlefield are threatened. Other evacuations are in effect. A closure of the Tie Creek and Placer Creek road systems remains in effect. Highway 43 could be impacted.

**Fool Creek** on the Lewis and Clark and Flathead National Forests, approximately 30 miles NW of Choteau. Fire is now 55,500 acres with 0% containment. Personnel assigned: 142. Lineback's Team's is assigned and is also managing the Ahorn Fire. Several outbuildings,

including a ski resort remain threaten (7 outbuildings have burned). Evacuations and road closures remain in effect.

**WH Complex** – These fires are located 27 miles S of Livingston, and 10 miles SE of Emigrant, MT. Total size of the complex is 29,350 acres with 10% containment. Stanich's Type 1 IMT is assigned. Personnel Assigned: 451. Structures remain threatened, Area Closures are in effect, and evacuations are still in place.

**Brush Creek** is located on the Flathead NF, twenty-five miles west of Whitefish, MT. Brush Creek is 28,928 acres with 70% containment. Hill's Type 2 IMT is assigned. Personnel assigned: 579. Residences and outbuildings remain threatened. Good Creek community may be evacuated if the fire grows.

**Skyland** is located on the Flathead NF near Summit. Pendleton's Type 1 IMT is assigned. Heintz's Type 2 IMT will be in-briefed today at 1400 hours. Fire is 43,408 acres with 52% containment. Personnel assigned: 505. Two structures are confirmed lost, numerous residences remain threatened. Evacuations for all areas have been reduced to Level 1.

**Powder River Complex** (13 fires) is thirty five miles southeast of Ashland. Johnson's Type 2 IMT is assigned. The complex is 27,511 acres with no report on containment. Personnel assigned: 356. No structures are currently threatened (2 structures have burned).

**Ahorn Fire** on the Lewis and Clark National Forest in Lewis and Clark County is being managed Lineback's Team's and they are also managing the Ahorn Fire. Current size is estimated at 50,450 acres and is 6% contained. Personnel Assigned: 258. Structure protection for residences and guest ranches in the Benchmark, Gibson, and Sun Canyon areas continue.

**Meriwether** located on the Helena National Forest in and around the Gates of the Mountains Wilderness. Carpenter's Type 3 organization is assigned. Current size is estimated at 42,849 acres with 75% containment. Personnel Assigned: 142. No structures are currently threatened.

**Corporal\*** is 18 miles east of Swan Lake on the Flathead NF. The Corporal Fire is 240 acres and 0% contained. A Type 4 IC is assigned. Personnel assigned: Not Reported. Cause: Lightning. One structure is threatened.

**Calbick** is located on the Flathead National Forest, approximately 20 miles South of East Glacier, MT. A Type 4 organization (Flint) is assigned. The Fire is approximately 300 acres in size, with 0 % containment. No structures are currently threatened, but structure protection measures are continuing in the Schafer Meadows area.

**Conger Creek** on the Lolo National Forest, approximately 20 miles north of Ovando. The fire is 10,500 acres with 0% containment. Doebling (Type 3 IC) is assigned with 23 personnel. 13 outbuildings are threatened.

**Pattengail Creek** on the Beaverhead-Deerlodge NF, 10 miles NE of Wisdom. The Pattengail Creek Fire is 11,788 acres and 0% contained. Molhoek's Type 2 IMT (also managing the Rat Creek Fire) is assigned; with 66 personnel. 12 structures could be

threatened.

**Railley Mountain** on the Flathead NF is 15 miles northeast of Seeley Lake. A previously reported confine/contain incident. The Railley Mountain Fire is 9,784 acres and 0% contained. No structures are threatened. Personnel assigned: 6. Cause: Lightning.

**Ovando Point** is on the Lolo National Forest, 6 miles northeast of Ovando. The Ovando Point Fire is 74 acres and 0% contained. Wilcox's Type 1 IMT assumed command of the Ovando Point Fire on 8/17. Overhead, crews, engines and other equipment were assigned to the incident and a base camp was established. Personnel assigned: 77. Cause: Lightning. Future reports will be included in the Jocko Lakes Incident.

**\* NEW FIRES (Emerging Extended Attack Fires over 100 acres in size)**

### III. Weather

#### **Red Flag Warnings and/or Fire Weather Watches:**

Today the National Weather Service offices in Missoula, Great Falls, Glasgow and Billings have issued a **Red Flag Warnings** for the majority of Montana.

#### **Definitions of a Fire Weather Watch and a Red Flag Warning:**

A fire weather watch or red flag warning is issued when the combination of dry fuels and weather conditions support extreme fire danger. These products are written for land and fire managers to highlight the increased fire danger.



A fire weather watch is issued up to 72 hours before the above conditions are expected to occur.

A red flag warning is issued when the conditions above are occurring or expected to occur within the next 24 hours. <http://www.weather.gov/>

**Weather Forecast** For current Fire Weather Predictions, see the Daily Outlook at: [http://gacc.nifc.gov/nrcc/predictive/outlooks/daily\\_outlook.pdf](http://gacc.nifc.gov/nrcc/predictive/outlooks/daily_outlook.pdf)

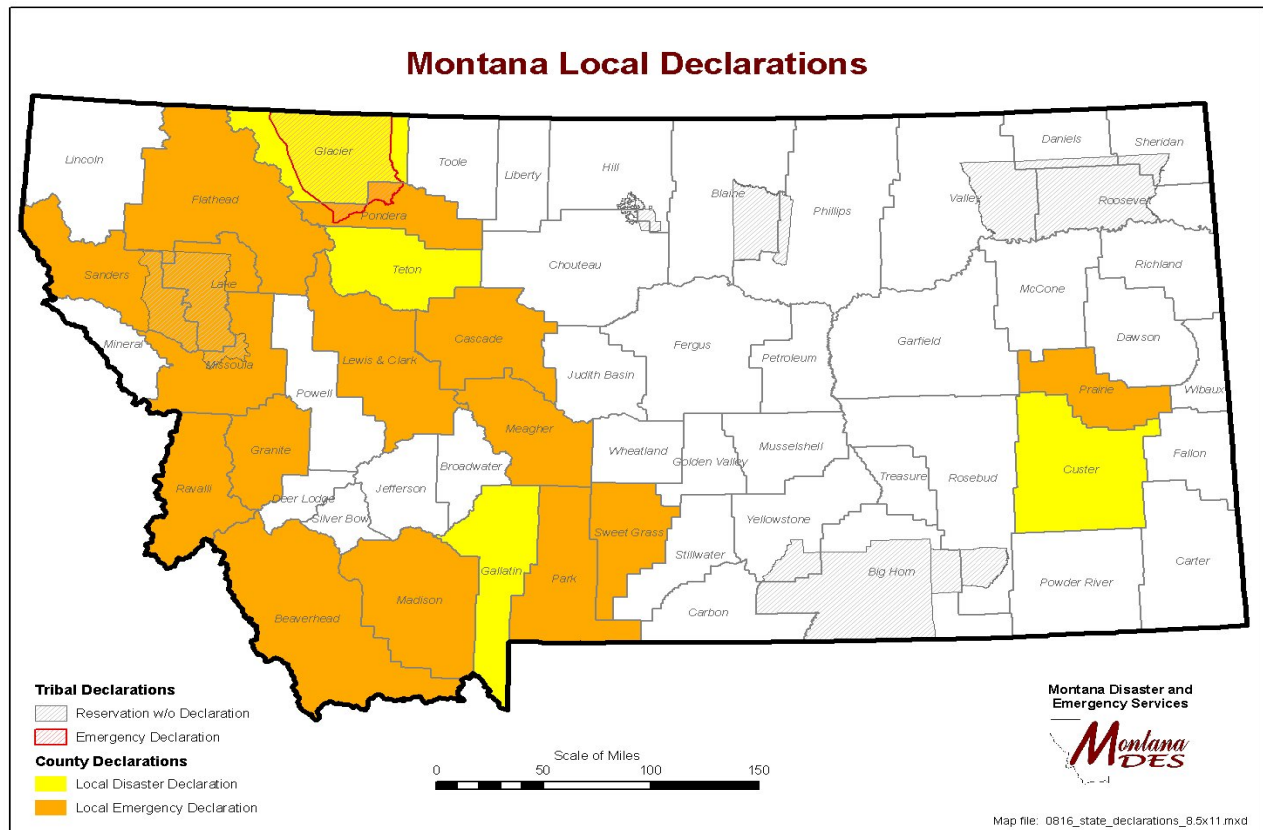
**Fire Behavior Forecast** For current Fire Behavior Predictions, see: [http://gacc.nifc.gov/nrcc/predictive/outlooks/fire\\_behavior/fire\\_behavior.pdf](http://gacc.nifc.gov/nrcc/predictive/outlooks/fire_behavior/fire_behavior.pdf)



#### IV. State Declarations

- Statewide Declaration of a Wildland Fire Emergency

#### V. Local and Tribal Declarations



- **State of Emergency.** The following jurisdictions have declared a state of emergency:

Lewis and Clark  
Lake  
Cascade  
Flathead  
Prairie  
Pondera  
Sweet Grass  
Madison

Ravalli  
Granite  
Missoula  
Sanders  
Beaverhead  
Blackfeet Nation  
Park  
Meagher

- **Disaster Declaration.** The following jurisdictions have declared a wildfire disaster:

Teton  
Glacier

Gallatin  
Custer

## **VI. Jurisdictional Emergency Operations**

- The Lewis and Clark County Emergency Operation Center was activated on July 19, 2007.
- The Flathead County Emergency Operations Center was activated on August 2, 2007.
- The Teton County Emergency Operations Center was activated on August 2, 2007.
- The Missoula County Emergency Operations Center is activated. Missoula County has a call center in place for public information. The phone number is 406-258-3680.
- The Granite County Emergency Operations Center has been activated.
- The Sanders County Emergency Operations Center is activated but mobile in the area of the Chippy Creek Fire.
- The Sweet Grass County Emergency Operations Center was activated on 8/12/07.
- The Powder River County Emergency Operations Center was activated on 8/14/07.

## **VII. Requests for State Financial Assistance**

- N/A

## **VIII. Fire Management Assistance Grants**

- Jocko Lakes FEMA-2718FM-MT approved 8/4/07
- Black Cat FEMA-2721FM-MT approved 8/16/07

## **IX. Emergency Management Assistance Compact Resources Committed**

- EMAC A-Team is assigned to the MT State Emergency Coordination Center.
- Two HEMTT aviation refuelers from Colorado National Guard are in Helena to support the Montana Army National Guard.

## **X. Summary of State Resources Committed (through the SECC)**

- MT-DES currently has two employees deployed with Incident Management Teams (through the Northern Rockies Coordination Center).
- Montana Army National Guard UH-60 Blackhawk modules have been deployed for initial attack to:
  - Kalispell
  - Missoula
  - Helena
- One Montana Army National Guard CH-47 Chinook and module has been deployed to assist with fire support on the Meriwether Fire.



- Montana National Guard Security Teams have been assigned to:
  - Meriwether Fire
  - Sawmill Complex
  - Jocko Lake (2 teams)
  - Fool Creek Fire
  - Black Cat Fire
- Montana Highway Patrol resources are assigned (as requested) to assist in traffic control and law enforcement support of large fires.
- Starting on July 20, 2007, at 0700 the SECC was staffed and activated to a Level III status with extended hours (0700-1900), seven days a week. The SECC remains at Level III. Outside of those hours, the MT DES staff Duty Officer is available 24 hrs and may be reached at (406) 841-3911.